

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 02520 011350Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 011334Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1846

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

CONFIDENTIAL DAMASCUS 2520

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS

SUBJ: IDF GOLAN MANEUVERS

REF: TEL AVIV 6170

1. IN OCTOBER 29 MEETING WITH COS SHIHABI, DISCUSSED CURRENT ISRAELI MANEUVERS. WAS UNAWARE THAT ISRAELIS HAD PREANNOUNCED THEM; THAT POINT DID NOT COME UP IN OUR DISCUSSION (REFTEL RECEIVED OCTOBER 30).

2. FOUND SHIHABI IN IRRITABLE MOOD ABOUT THESE MANEUVERS. HIS POSITION IN BRIEF IS THAT SYRIAN MANEUVERS ARE CONSISTENTLY CONDUCTED WELL BACK FROM THE DISENGAGEMENT ZONE WHILE ISRAELIS PUSH THEIR'S INTO THE ZONE NEAR THE A LINE. STATED HE HAD REPORTS ENTRY OF INCREASED NUMBER ISRAELIS TANKS TO THE ZONE OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS.

3. CURRENT MANEUVERS ACCORDING TO HIS FIELD REPORT OF OCTOBER 29, INCLUDE TARGETING OF HEAVY ARTILLERY BURSTS ONTO AREA JUST BEYOND KUNEITRA. SHIHABI TERMED LATEST MANEUVERS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 DAMASC 02520 011350Z

SHOWED CLEAR ISRAELI INTENTION TO INCREASE TENSION IN THE AREA.

HE FOUND THEIR TIMING IN CONJUNCTION WITH RABAT SUMMIT CONFERENCE NOT JUST SIMPLE COINCIDENCE.

4. SHIHABI ASKED RHETORICAL QUESTION, "WHEN DOES A WAR START? THE ISRAELIS ARE VIOLATING THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT; THEY ARE INCREASING TENSION BETWEEN US. IS NOT THEIR PUSHING TOWARDS A WAR EQUIVALENT TO CAUSING A WAR?" I REPLIED THAT WE WERE CLEARLY PASSING THROUGH A SENSITIVE TIME WHEN IN MY OPINION IT BEHOOVED SYRIA TO EXERCISE STRICT SELF-CONTROL. ASSURED SHIHABI THAT WE TAKE SERIOUSLY ALL VIOLATIONS OF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WHEN INVESTIGATION CONFIRMS THEM.

4. COMMENT: I TAKE SHIHABI'S COMPLAINTS AS BEING FOR THE RECORD RATHER THAN AS A HINT THAT SYRIA FEELS ITSELF UNDER SUCH PROVOCATION THAT IT WILL HAVE TO RESPOND WITH ITS OWN EXERCISES IN OR NEAR THE ZONE. I WILL TAKE OCCASION NEXT MEETIG TO NOTE PRIOR IDF ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESE EXERCISES AND TRY TO DETERMINE HOW INFORMATION REACHED DAMASCUS. AM MUCH ENCOURAGED THAT IDF GAVE PRIOR NOTICE IN THIS CASE AND HOPE THIS COULD BECOME SOP.
MURPHY

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